

LA Times slashes a fifth of its newsroom jobs

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The Los Angeles Times is slashing a fifth of its newsroom jobs, in the latest blow to an industry that has struggled to make the economics of the online world work.

The Los Angeles Times said Tuesday it laying off more than a fifth of its journalists, in another example of how news media in the United

States and around the world are struggling to cope with the disruptions of the internet age.

The announcement came as staff at the Conde Nast group, which publishes Vanity Fair and Vogue, took strike action over looming job cuts, and as belt-tightening ripples through several major titles.

The Los Angeles Times, which is bleeding cash, said it will eliminate at least 115 newsroom positions as it seeks to right its listing balance sheet.

"Today's decision is painful for all, but it is imperative that we act urgently and take steps to build a sustainable and thriving paper for the next generation," owner Patrick Soon-Shiong said, according to the paper.

The Times, like many legacy media, has struggled to adapt to the economics of the online world, particularly the loss of advertising revenue and dwindling subscriber numbers.

Unionized journalists at the paper walked off the job last week when reports first emerged that managers were considering drastic cuts.

Soon-Shiong said the walk-out "did not help" and he expressed disappointment that the newsroom guild had not partnered with managers to find ways to save jobs.

Nevertheless, Tuesday's cuts seemed to come suddenly.

"The LA Times laid us off in an HR zoom webinar with chat disabled, no q&a, no chance to ask questions," breaking news editor Jared Servantez wrote on X, formerly known as Twitter.

"As a colleague described it, 'that was like a drive-by,'" he added.

"The journalism grim reaper has arrived at my door and what once was a dream is now a nightmare," wrote reporter Queenie Wong.

Staff across the publication were understood to be affected, including some working at the White House in this presidential election year.

The Los Angeles Times Guild, which represents the majority of journalists at the paper, blasted cuts it said were "devastating" by any measure.

"To our members and their families, to our morale, to the quality of our journalism, to the bond with our audience, and to the communities that depend on our work," the guild said in a statement.

The layoffs come on top of more than 70 positions that were eliminated last year.

They also came days after the abrupt departure of executive editor Kevin Merida, a respected industry figure who joined the paper in 2021 with a brief to offer stability in a time of turmoil.

Soon-Shiong, who bought the outlet six years ago, is understood to be subsidizing it to the tune of between \$30 and \$40 million a year.

The Times was once a giant on the US media stage, with correspondents around the globe.

But years of retrenchments have seen it shrink.

Critics say while it still paints itself as a national paper with a West Coast perspective, it has a much more parochial feel nowadays.

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